

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-16. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing integrated circuit devices[[,]] using a mask, the method comprising:

receiving a mask in a first pod, the mask including an active region and a guard ring structure having at least one fuse structure[[:]], the fuse structure including a plurality of elongated members;

transferring the mask from the first pod into a second pod within a clean room environment;

handling the mask in the clean room environment;

accumulating static electricity on the mask during the handling in the clean room environment;

discharging a portion of the static charge to the fuse on the guard ring structure of the mask while maintaining the active region of the mask free from static energy damage; and

using the mask in an operation for manufacture of semiconductor integrated circuits.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the operation is a lithography process.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the static energy is characterized by a voltage of 1000 volts.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the static energy is characterized by a voltage of greater than 3000 volts.

21. (New) The method of claim 17 wherein each of the elongated members is a finger including a free end facing an insulating region.

22. (New) The method of claim 21 wherein a small gap is defined between the free end and a conductive structure.

23. (New) The method of claim 21 wherein the conductive structure is a region where electrostatic charge is accumulated.

24. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein charge traverses from the conductive structure through the small gap to the finger.

25. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the finger acts as an antenna and once the charge traverses through the small gap, electrostatic charge is discharged.

26. (New) A method for manufacturing integrated circuit devices using a mask, the method comprising:

receiving a mask in a first pod, the mask including an active region and an anti-static guard ring structure, the guard ring structure further including a first guard ring structure and a second guard ring structure having a plurality of fuse structures;

transferring the mask from the first pod into a second pod within a clean room environment;

handling the mask in the clean room environment;

discharging electrostatic charges built up from the handling of the mask to the plurality of fuse structures of the mask while maintaining the active region of the mask free from damage caused by electrostatic charges; and

using the mask in an operation for manufacture of semiconductor integrated circuits.

27. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein the first guard ring structure serves as isolation between the active region and the second guard ring structure.

28. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein the first guard ring structure comprises a trench region filled with a dielectric layer.

29. (New) The method of claim 28 wherein the trench region is 20 micron or less in width and 300nm to 1000nm in thickness.

30. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein the second guard ring structure surrounds the periphery of the active region and the first guard ring structure.

31. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein the second guard ring structure includes a plurality of fuse structures configured to form the guard ring structure in a sequential manner.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein each of the fuse structures includes a plurality of elongated members.

33. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein each of the elongated members is a finger having a free end.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein each of the elongated members is substantially in parallel with another elongated member.